Through a quite comical misunderstanding, Stanley Yelnats, a very quiet and unassuming boy, is sent to a detention camp for problem boys after being dubbed a thief. There he meets and befriends several other boys who are either living up to or fighting against their labels as well. *Holes,* by Louis Sachar, is a story about fate, friendship, and finding yourself with a dash of comedy to make it all the more enjoyable. It intertwines three story plots; the beginning of the Yelnats family curse originating in Latvia, the legend of Kissing Kate Barlow, and the present day story of Stanley Yelnats. The two past stories are significant to the present story line and all three often intertwine.

I love this book for its plot twists, its humor, and especially the past and present story lines. When teaching this book it is the story lines and the characterization that I will focus on. Since there are essentially three stories happening at once in *Holes* it is the perfect book to talk about the beginning, middle and end. The characters are also very well developed which makes it easier for students to put themselves in the place of those characters which can lead to fantastic writing prompts. *Holes* is a fun book that children can enjoy. It is a novel that leads itself, not only into areas of academia (writing, vocabulary, story plots…) but also to hands on, FUN, and imaginative activities as well.

**Pre-reading Activities**

1. *Pre-teaching vocabulary*- Have the students learn new vocabulary from the novel by first finding the definitions and then reinforce the vocabulary by pairing students together to play Password.
2. *Motivating: Making Predictions-* Show students various items of significance to the novel and have them write how they think these items come into play or relate to one another throughout the story.

**During Reading Activities**

1. *Silent Reading: Summary Journals*- Students will sit and read silently to themselves for a period of time during which students will write in their journals a short summary of what they are reading.
2. *Modifying the text*- Have students pair up to read a selection and re-write the passage in their own words. Share everyone’s modifications with the class to strengthen comprehension of the text. \*\*Differentiation
3. *Reading to Students*- Teacher will read aloud to students sections of the book or whole chapters.

**Post Reading Activities**

1. *Artistic: Attention to Detail*- After reading the chapter that describes the lizards, students will be handed a lizard cutout and asked to decorate it using the novel’s description.
2. *Graphic: Characterization*- Help students to construct large orange stick-like men (about 2 feet X 4 feet) to represent each of the seven boys in tent D to hang on the wall. Label each orange stick man with the character’s name and nickname. As students learn details about each boy from Tent D, they will fill in the information on the corresponding stick man during class discussions of the novel, *Holes*.
3. *Writing: Letters from home*- To continue to build on characterization, have the students write to their mothers through the eyes of a boy other than Stanley from the novel.
4. *Discussion: Plots-* Outline the plots for all three story lines that transpire in the novel, Holes. As a whole class, discuss how the story lines effect one another or when they may have intersected in the novel.
5. *Discussion: Compare and Contrast*- Watch the movie, Holes, if time allows (excerpts of it if time does not). As a class fill out a Venn Diagram of how the movie and the novel are similar and differ.

Students who enjoyed the novel and would like to continue to read something similar may also enjoy *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen and *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O’Dell. These books are also about kids who are left to their own devices and become heroes/heroines.

**PASSWORD**

How to play Password

1. Students will get into pairs (or groups of 4 with 2 students being on a team)

2. Student (Team) A will begin to give Student (Team) B clues to the password written on their index card.

3. Once Student (Team) B has successfully guessed password, or time has run out, the roles will reverse.

4. Student (Team) B will begin to give Student (Team) A clues to the password written on their index card.

**Rules for Clues**The Password is always a SINGLE word, not hyphenated and NOT a proper noun.

1. The CLUE word must be a SINGLE, non-hyphenated word. For example, the clue "well-to-do" would not be allowed.

2. Proper nouns may be used as CLUE words. Thus, "Hitchcock" may be given for the Password "mystery".

3. No part or form of the Password may be used as a clue. "Chemist" could not be used for "chemistry", "steal" could not be used for "stolen", and "monk" could not be used for "monkey".

4. Specific gestures and pantomime are NOT ALLOWED. For example, a player may not whisper "silence" to get "quiet" as a response.

5. A previously given CLUE word may be repeated by either player. It is also okay to link a clue to previous CLUE words. For example, "race", "horse" , and "rider" may be three separate CLUE words linked together to get "jockey" as a response.

6. NO SPELLING of a CLUE word is allowed.

7. If a FORM of the Password is given as a RESPONSE, the responding player is given ONE CHANCE to correct the word to the exact Password. For example, if "mud" is given for the Password "muddy", the player is told that they have given a form of the word and have one chance to correct it. If they don't come up with "muddy" in their next response, the Password is thrown out and no one scores on that word.

Adapted from:   
http://www.educationallearninggames.com/how-to-play-Password-game-rules.asp